



**DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY  
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION (WRAC)  
UPPER EAST COAST WATER SUPPLY PLAN (Plan)  
REGIONAL WORKSHOP  
South Florida Water Management District  
City of Stuart – City Hall  
121 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart, Florida 34994  
Friday, August 8, 2003**

**Attendees:**

Lennart Lindahl – Chairman of UECWSP and SFWMD Governing Board Member

**WRAC Members:**

Doug Bournique  
Patrick Hayes

Linda McCann-Hake

**WRAC Alternates:**

Daniel Hayes

John Mitnik

**Interested Parties:**

Philip Dover  
Kevin Downing  
Clyde Dulin  
Doug Dycus  
Margueita Espal  
Janet Gettig  
Julie Jennison  
George Johnson  
David Kelly  
Steve Lamb  
John Lapikas

Brad Macek  
Linda McCarthy  
Peter Merritt  
Anne Murray  
Dave Petero  
Max Quackenbos  
Donna Rhodan  
Donna Smith  
Ron Smola  
Diane Waite

**SFWMD Staff:**

Ken Ammon  
Renee DeSantos  
Mark Elsner  
Sharon Fowler  
David Gilpin-Hudson  
Linda Hoppes

John Mulliken  
Michelle Pearcy  
Beth Ross  
Kathy Smith  
Keith Smith  
Ron Smola  
David Unsell  
Pat Walker

**Welcome and Introductions** by Len Lindahl, Chairman, Upper East Coast Regional Water Supply Plan Committee and SFWMD Governing Board Member. He called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Chairman Lindahl asked all attendees to state their name and affiliation.

At the last meeting he said there were seven items identified for follow-up. The following are the update on each:

1. Continue coordination with Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). *The Water Supply Department at SFWMD is continuing to work closely with the Indian River Lagoon Feasibility Study Team.*
2. Integrate Loxahatchee River Minimum Flows and Levels (MFL) with Upper East Coast (UEC) Water Supply Plan. *Information on the Loxahatchee River minimum flows and levels and other efforts on establishing water reservations were discussed. (The latest information will be provided in the UEC Water Supply Plan Update.)*
3. Continue Floridan Well Abandonment Program. *Water Use Regulation staff will update the well inventory during the Upper East Coast permit renewal process. Permit holders will be required to plug all wells that will not be used or do not meet well construction standards.*
4. Future presentation with St. Johns River Water Management District on boundary conditions. *This is being scheduled for a future meeting.*
5. Explain how the proposed public interest rule links with Water Supply Regulation. *The SFWMD Office of Counsel contacted stakeholders to explain the public interest issue. The District is engaged with a separate Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) group to discuss the linkage of Consumptive Use Permits (CUP) and CERP.*
6. Locate Water Use Permitting staff in temporary offices within the UEC region during the renewal of irrigation class permits. *A comprehensive outreach strategy to facilitate the permit renewal process has been developed by SFWMD staff. Meetings in the District's Martin/St. Lucie Service Center will facilitate the public in obtaining permits. A toll-free Water Use Hotline and basinwide pre-application meetings are planned.*
7. Presentation from Public Water Supply and Agriculture on "state of the industry." *This is on today's agenda.*

**Presentation:**

Overview of Process for Plan Update by Sharon Fowler, Sr. Planner, Planning & Development, Water Supply Department, SFWMD

Ms. Fowler presented the Planning Process for future meetings. The process includes reporting to the full WRAC on October 3, 2003 in Martin County and reporting to the Governing Board on November 12, 2003.

The next workshop is on September 18. Chapter 2 (Demand Estimates and Projections) Chapter 3 (Resource Analysis) will be distributed. The discussion will focus on the plan goal and objectives in Chapter 1.

At the workshop on November 7, the team will finalize the objectives of the plan. On January 14, 2004, the recommendations will be refined and on February 27, the final recommendations will be made.

Chairman Lindahl said there are two other agencies looking at the Upper East Coast Water Supply. One is the Council of 100, which is a group of public citizens concerned with the current water supply. They have been working on this issue for about a year and have developed a draft plan. Similar activity by the State Chamber of Commerce is looking at the water resource issues. Both of these groups will provide vital input for the SFWMD Plan.

Ms. Fowler said the UEC Water Supply Plan Update will consist of three documents: the Planning Document, the Appendices, as well as a Districtwide Consolidated Support Document.

Chairman Lindahl asked for questions and comments from the group on the proposed Planning Process.

Mr. Hayes asked for a list of the Council of 100 and he spoke on the Florida's Agricultural Water Policy document recently released by Commissioner Charles H. Bronson of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Chairman Lindahl provided information on both those issues.

**Presentation:**

State of the Agricultural Industry, Douglas Bournique, Indian River Citrus League, Executive Vice President and Director

Chairman Lindahl introduced Mr. Bournique and commended him for his work in the citrus industry.

Mr. Bournique said he represents most of the citrus industry farmers on the East Coast of Florida. They are the oldest citrus growing organization in the United States. The presentation gave an overview of the citrus industry in the three major regions of South Florida. The United States Trade Agreements with other countries have caused a tremendous financial loss to the citrus industry. Mr. Bournique said that the average number of acres per farmer is about 176 acres; and profits are minimal for farmers with fewer than 200 acres.

A chart from the SFWMD showed that citrus is the most significant crop in the Upper East Coast.

Mr. Bournique continued his presentation with information on tree farming, plant nurseries, etc. He thinks the citrus industry is suffering and does not see growth for the citrus industry, but rather a slight decline in acreage. A discussion of "rehabbing" and the "sour orange" problem was held.

A question and answer session was held. Approximately 80 percent of citrus land east of Interstate 95 will eventually be lost to development. Hopefully, farmers will move to the west to acquire land for citrus growing.

Mr. Bournique also noted that proposed CERP reservoirs and other components would also occupy lands currently used for citrus production.

**Presentation:**

State of the Public Water Supply Industry (PWS) by Brad Macek and Donna Rhoden, City of Port St. Lucie

Ms. Rhoden said that over her 17 years with the City of Port St. Lucie, she has seen unsurpassed growth in the area. This seriously affects the water supply. The history of the population growth in the city from 1960 to date was presented. The Utility Water and Sewer Department at the city has been working very hard to keep up with the population explosion within the City's boundaries.

Mr. Macek presented information on the water plant expansions from July 1999 through February 2005. Wastewater plant expansion is taking place for the city. The growth of the water customer base has been huge, and it has been difficult to keep up with the demand by the public for water. New growth has been tremendous and the city is also retrofitting major portions of the city with water and sewer. The city uses the surficial aquifer and the Floridan aquifer to meet the water demands. Future growth will be met with water from the Floridan aquifer. Monitoring of chloride levels was discussed.

Mr. Macek itemized some public water supply issues, including the model used for predicting water quality changes in Floridan aquifer; abandoning Artesian wells; and the need for increased funding for alternative water supplies.

Chairman Lindahl spoke on the land acquisitions in the area and the Port St. Lucie Water Utilities Company.

A question and answer session followed.

A question on a comparison of water demand characteristics and use rates in urban areas versus agricultural areas was asked. Information on this will be presented at a future meeting. Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the urban areas were discussed.

**Presentation:**

Analysis Approach for Update by Mark Elsner, Lead Engineer, Planning & Development, Water Supply Department, SFWMD

- 1998 UECWSP Analysis
- Demand Projections
- Plan Update Approach

The presentation gave an overview of the 1998 UECWSP analysis and results; 2025 demand projections; and 2005 UECWSP update suggested analysis approach. Mr. Elsner said this presentation is for information purposes at this time. He encouraged input from the stakeholders attending the meeting.

The tools and assumptions used in the 1998 plan were summarized. A map was shown of the comprehensive modeling effort used. The 1998 analysis incorporated the 1-in-10 level of certainty; 20-year planning horizon; and resource protection criteria for wetlands and the Floridan Aquifer. Vulnerability mapping was used for saltwater intrusion.

Information on the wetland protection criterion and the Floridan aquifer protection criterion was presented. The 1998 analysis model simulations and projected demand levels were discussed. The findings and conclusions for public water suppliers and urban irrigation users were shown. The post-1998 activities include all major coastal PWS facilities tapping the Floridan aquifer to meet their future need. In several cases, these utilities have reduced withdrawals from the surficial aquifer with withdrawals from the Floridan aquifer. Utilities using the Floridan aquifer, or have Floridan wells under construction Fort Pierce Utilities Authority, Port St. Lucie, Martin County (Jensen Beach and Tropical Farms) and South Martin Regional. The use of reclaimed water has tripled to over 9 mgd from 1996 levels and is increasing. Utilities implementing reuse include: Indiantown, Port St. Lucie Southport, Martin County – Jensen Beach, Dixie Park, Martin Downs and Tropical Farms, and South Martin Regional. The ongoing conversion of flood irrigation to microjet in citrus has continued. The Indian River Lagoon – South Florida Final Feasibility Report is being enhanced to become a Project Implementation Report (including the Division Engineer's notice) by mid-December 2003.

Chairman Lindahl said that the correct demand numbers are very important and need to be constantly reviewed and updated. A stakeholder asked an analysis be shown of citrus lands that are known to be coming out of production (specifically for CERP) in addition to the current trend lines.

The presentation showed:

1. The water demand projections from the 1998 plan versus the current projections.
2. That conclusions of the 1998 UECWSP are still valid.
3. The resource protection criteria are consistent with current regulatory criteria.
4. That a 1-in-10 level of certainty was provided.
5. Increases in PWS demands are primarily being met with the Floridan aquifer.
6. The increases in urban irrigation demands are being met with reclaimed water and project-by-project water use permitting.
7. The 1998 UECWSP recommendations are being followed.
8. Agricultural irrigation demands have decreased.
9. A decrease in public water supply SAS withdrawals in the Jensen Beach area has occurred.
10. Local governments and water users proactive efforts will help facilitate additional a level of certainty.

Mr. Elsner presented the staff recommendations for the 2004 UECWSP analysis approach – incorporate the 1998 analysis into the 2004 update, and focus on solution development.

**Presentation:**

**Plan Expectations by Ken Ammon, Department Director, Water Supply Department, SFWMD**

Chairman Lindahl said Mr. Ammon would not make a formal presentation, but he would facilitate identifying issues from the stakeholders.

Mr. Ammon said this was an “open forum” for questions from the stakeholders. The Plan’s expectations are what will be discussed today. He reviewed the issues he had heard today.

A list of a summary of the questions and answers follow:

Q Using fresh water going to tide as a part of the IRLFS Plan, a project to meet agricultural demands, what are the drawbacks?

A *The Indian River Lagoon Feasibility Study covered that thoroughly. The negatives were the connection to Lake Okeechobee. Environmentalists have expressed concerns. Controversy has been expressed regarding the future operation of the diversion structures and being a feeder to the Lake and causing damage. The same has been discussed regarding the Loxahatchee River and the Loxahatchee Slough.*

Q The Loxahatchee River was referred to as being addressed in the Northern Palm Beach (Northern) Plan. There is no comparison of the attention paid to the Loxahatchee River versus the St. Lucie River. What plans are being made for the Loxahatchee River?

A. *The Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee is in the Northern and LEC Water Supply (LEC) Plan. The entire watershed of the Loxahatchee needs to be focused upon. Current information on the Loxahatchee River will be presented in the UEC update.*

Q Have surface water budgets been prepared for the entire watershed for the Loxahatchee?

A Yes, they have to be.

Q Is saltwater intrusion of the Loxahatchee River going to be addressed?

A *Saltwater intrusion up the Loxahatchee River is the primary reason for development of the MFL. The estuarine piece in the Northern/LEC Plan will be considered.*

Q Are both the northern half and southern half of the Loxahatchee Watershed being addressed in the Plan?

A *The decision to make sure the full basin is accounted for and integrated is on the table. A discussion has been held on including the entire basin into one Plan, but there are political barriers and county lines. This decision will have to be determined later. Water supply planning is impacted by man and by political subdivisions.*

Q St. Lucie systems and estuaries in the Loxahatchee are almost the same watershed. There is almost one system where the water will flow off the wetland systems and some might go to the Northfork and some to the estuaries. Excess flow and constant water were questioned.

A *This has been brought up, and it was decided, to expand the boundaries in the CERP project to include the entire watershed. Hopefully, if excess water is needed for the Loxahatchee, that water could come from the C-44. The availability of funding for water supply issues, as well as flood control issues, was a huge step in the right direction when this area was put in the CERP footprint.*

Stakeholder Comment: This appears to be a “win-win” situation and is good.

Q On the matter of CERP, an undertone in the CERP planning of 20,000 acre feet would go north for irrigation. Is that out of the IRL Plan?

A *It is not currently in the IRL Plan because it got stonewalled. In CERP there is a storage facility component. It may be good to incorporate options in the UEC Plan addressing that matter. We are not addressing the boundaries that are too small or too large. We are not bound by that. This increased the storage needs.*

Q Are the C-23 and C-24 canals first used for drainage and their minor function for water storage?

A *That depends on whether you are a citrus grower or a homeowner. Surface water from the C-23, C-24 canals are vital to the citrus industry, which is a water supply need. The canals recharge the groundwater table. The C-23, C-24, and C-25 have multiple uses, but storage is a limited function.*

Q The UEC Plan stated there was not going to be enough water to meet demands. Why was the minimum flows and levels set and why a restrictive clause in that Plan? [The stakeholder is concerned about that being in the Plan.] The low [minimum] levels have already been set.

A *The direct and indirect impacts for consumptive use permits (CUPs) were explained. There is a connection to the water supply plans through the CUP Rules which must be considered. There is a linkage between the UEC and LEC plans in the basin from a hydrologic standpoint. The CERP is specifically looking at the Loxahatchee Basin as being connected.*

Q In the previous Water Supply Plan, one of the goals for the Floridan aquifer was to address water quality of the aquifer. Does this mean there will be less reliance on the aquifer?

A *No. The Floridan aquifer has been used for many years in the UEC without significant changes in water quality. With increased use from public water supply, the 1998 plan identified a potential need for predictable analysis for water quality to predict changes, if any.*

### Summary of Plan Expectations for the UECWSP

- Need for Floridan aquifer modeling for 2009 plan update
- Abandonment of Floridan wells
- Funding of alternative water supplies
- Agricultural conversions from flood to micro irrigation
- Transition of water use from agricultural to urban land use
- Transition of land use from citrus to CERP
- SJRWMD boundary conditions
- Redirect flow from C-44 northward to C-canals
- Need for Loxahatchee River MFL and Restoration to be coordinated by CERP and water supply planning

### **Presentation:**

#### Distribute Chapter 1 of Plan Update by Sharon Fowler

A draft of Chapter 1 of the Planning Document was distributed. Ms. Fowler that Chapter 1 contains the goal and objectives from the previous plan and they have not changed. She asked the stakeholders to focus on the objectives and to bring their comments back to the next meeting (September 18, 2003). Their comments will be incorporated into the chapter.

A stakeholder said that in the Chapter 1 under Estuaries – it does not mention the Loxahatchee River and she would like it to be added.

### Next Workshop

Chairman Lindahl said the next meeting will be held at the USDA-URS Laboratory on September 18, 2003 in Ft. Pierce at 9:00 am.

Adjournment at 12:30 pm.

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Paula Moree  
District Deputy Clerk